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MEMORANDUM FOR: Admiral Daniel J. Murphy, USN
Deputy to the DCI for the Intelligence
Community

FROM: [REDACTED]
Chief, Production Assessment and
Improvement Division

VIA: Director of Performance Evaluation
and Improvement

SUBJECT: PAID Assessment of Team B Critique
of Intelligence Community Performance

REFERENCE: A Team Comments on Team B Report
(Memo to A/DCI from Stoertz, NIO/SP),
pp. 8-20

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1. I am forwarding an independent assessment of the Team B report developed by Bill Baier on the basis of a detailed PAID and Integration Staff review of past national estimates dealing with Soviet strategic programs and policies. Our assessment was reviewed in draft by several intelligence officers, including the relevant NIOs, selected analysts in the DDI, and Bob Hewitt, the contractor who helped draft the NIO assessment of the Team B report on Soviet Strategic Objectives (Reference). The views of these commentators have been considered and incorporated where useful in the final PAID assessment. The final product, however, is our own view of the Team B report; there has been no attempt to develop an assessment coordinated with the NIOs and CIA.

2. A comparison of the views expressed in the NIO and PAID assessment of the B Team report is difficult because our approaches to the problem, and probably our basic purposes, differ. Our own review sought to derive some benefit from the B Team criticism--to note past deficiencies in IC performance, corrective action on the part of the estimators and Community analytic components, and the much improved estimating posture prevailing today. The NIO review tends to be defensive and faultfinding, with much less regard for the cathartic aspects of the B Team appraisal.

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3. Nevertheless, the NIO and PAID assessments are in general agreement regarding four of the five basic charges of the B Team.

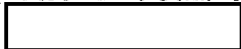
- We both agree with the B Team that there has been mirror-imaging in the past on the part of the national estimators.
- We both tend to agree with the B Team--PAID more strongly than the NIOs--that there is a need for more comprehensive treatment of what the B Team refers to as Soviet "grand strategy."
- We both disagree with the B Team charge of policy bias in some strategic force estimates.
- We both disagree with the B Team commentary on unsupported net assessments in the estimates. The NIOs and PAID accept the finding that there was too much gratuitous net assessing in past estimates but find considerable care in the more recent estimates regarding overall judgment of the US/Soviet balance.

4. PAID and the NIOs part company on the basic criticism of the B Team--that too much of our analytic resources are allocated to "hard data" analysis and far too little attention and effort is devoted to the sizeable body of "soft data" that relates to Soviet strategy, goals and intentions. PAID believes that there are too few Community experts on Soviet affairs and that they can rarely find time to dig deeply into the available data and reflect on the relevant issues of long term Soviet military policy. It is our general agreement with the thrust of that B Team criticism on the analysis of "soft data" that underpins much of our thinking on strengthening Community analysis in several areas pertaining to Soviet military, economic, and foreign policy. Fritz Ermarth and I have developed a paper on this matter and have sent it to selected NIOs and members of the CIA, DOD, and IC Staff for comments. Based on these comments and our further examination of the analytic base for estimates on the Soviet Union, we intend to propose specific corrective actions.

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Attachment:
The B Team Report

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THE B TEAM REPORTSoviet Strategic Objectives: AnAlternate ViewIntroduction:

The purpose of this memorandum is to briefly assess the value, validity and significance of the B Team Report. It attempts to give some judgment on the contributions of the B Team exercise and to determine whether the report should be revered, damned and discarded, or taken as a useful but unsteady step in the right direction.

The B Team report, "Soviet Strategic Objectives: An Alternate View" was requested to provide an independent look at the data available for the drafting of NIE 11-3/8-76. The study was designed to determine whether or not the data could reasonably support an alternative, more threatening, view of Soviet strategic objectives and intentions than that developed by the traditional NIE process. This approach was recommended by the PFIAB a year ago as a way of assessing the credibility of some anxiety over Soviet behavior on the part of a growing element of responsible US observers of Soviet military and foreign policy.

The membership of the B Team was selected by design from the group of critics who strongly believe that the long run goal of Soviet military policy is more threatening than generally recognized and fully consistent with the Marxist-Leninist expectations of Communist-world domination. The hope was that, with reasonable scholarship, such a team might be able to develop from the same body of data available to NIE drafters a logical and well-documented basis for their alternative view. Unfortunately, this did not come to pass.

The B Team has produced an alternate view; but it is asserted, not documented. Even when it scores debating points by challenging the weaknesses in the underpinnings of present and past NIEs, the B Team memorandum offers little in the way of well-referenced, authoritative bases for its contrary interpretations. Moreover, the report lacks perspective and reflects little understanding of the intelligence process and the influence of changing priorities and source materials that tend to channel

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analytic efforts. Nevertheless, we find the B Team report to be a disturbing portrayal of the intelligence record, one that calls for careful review, some corrective action, and analytic priorities that will assure continuance of the good work noted by the B team in the more recent estimates.

Our review of Soviet military estimates since 1960 and general knowledge of the Community's analytic output support much of the Team B criticism. Their assessment does lack documentation, and their charge that intelligence consistently underestimated Soviet objectives and intentions is far too simplistic. But the central theme of their protest against the Intelligence Community is close to the mark: intelligence has been unable to consistently support sufficient analysis of the pertinent available data to fully understand the Russian mentality and the motivations that lie behind Soviet military policy.

The B Team Position

The causes of the Community's failure to understand Soviet long run objectives are, in the eyes of Team B members, endemic to the intelligence system and procedures that have been operative over the past 25 years. The Team B report notes five important causal factors for what it perceives as the Community's inaccurate appreciation of Soviet intentions:

- Lack of attention to soft data;
- Mirror-imaging on the part of US analysts and estimators;
- Separate assessments of the various Soviet weapons programs;
- Unsupported net assessments; and
- Policy bias on the part of the Intelligence Community.

A brief comment on each follows:

(1) Lack of attention to soft data.

The term "hard data" is generally taken to include demonstrable fact as noted in photography, explicit intercepted communications and telemetry, or unambiguous documentary information on government decisions and policy. In the world of military intelligence, such data relate to military hardware, and its characteristics. "Soft data," on the contrary, includes writings of

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Soviet military commentators, the reporting of emigres, defectors and official embassy observers, much clandestine reporting and SIGINT data, and most open source material. Such data relate to doctrine, goals and objectives, broad strategy, and force planning. Soft data lack precision and require substantial amounts of analysis and molding with hard data in order to develop reliable interpretations. Even so, judgments tend to be intuitive and subjective, and controversy prevails where uncertainty remains.

Soft data form the guts of the evidence on Soviet strategy and intentions, and much of the Team B critique is based on the accusation that the Intelligence Community pays only slight attention to it. A review of the estimates since 1960 indicates a cyclical treatment of soft data which, in general, reflects a changing emphasis in intelligence analytic memoranda and reports. There was a substantial deemphasis on the study of soft data during the latter 1960s, and a reemphasis during the 1970s. The return to soft data analysis was due in part to:

- pressure from Andy Marshall, Jim Schlesinger, and others.
- a desire to provide more credible interpretations of the hard data.
- more and better documentary information, most notably on Soviet ground forces.
- sensitivities of the US/Soviet military balance which put premiums on detailed analysis of force effectiveness, doctrine and intentions.

Since the early 1970s both DIA and CIA have restructured analytic entities to focus more resources on military issues demanding more attention to soft data. But the rebound in analytic capability has been slow because data bases and skilled manpower had atrophied over the years. Moreover, as indicated in the recent IC Staff Semiannual Review of Intelligence Production, the consumer continues to demand "hard fact" reporting and this alone absorbs the efforts of a sizeable portion of the available analytic manpower.

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(2) Mirror-imaging distorts US intelligence appraisals of Soviet objectives.

In mirror-imaging one assumes that the goals and policy decisions of other countries are brought about by the same factors, aspirations and values that motivate US policy decisions. Specifically, Team B accuses the Intelligence Community of seeing both Soviet and US leaderships appalled by the obvious destructive outcome of a strategic nuclear war. Therefore both leaderships are motivated to:

- prevent nuclear war through policies of assured destruction of the other side.
- place unilateral limits on the size of strategic nuclear forces to a level sufficient to guarantee a sizeable retaliatory capability--either parity or sufficiency.
- press for arms control agreements as intrinsically worthwhile.
- move toward a mutually satisfactory balance of US/Soviet forces and a policy of detente.

Team B states that US intelligence has wrongly imputed these motives to Soviet force planners and that, to the contrary, any comprehensive study of the data available on Soviet strategy and intentions will show that the Soviets actively strive for the eventual superiority of Soviet forces and the creation of a war-winning strategic force posture, as opposed to a deterrence-only posture. While such a conclusion may be open to discussion, the charge of mirror-imaging is sustained insofar as it relates to estimates of the 1960s. Again, the US fallback on mirror-imaging, where applicable, to describe Soviet motives can be blamed on deficient analysis of soft data that can often provide a more realistic appreciation of Soviet motivation and objectives. It is clear from the record that in the 1960s the Community did incorrectly assess the prevailing Soviet military thinking on the requirements for Soviet missile forces. The estimates viewed the Soviets as wedded to a policy of assured destruction and estimated that this and other factors would lead the Soviets to be satisfied with a general parity of strategic forces. In retrospect, we now know, from more recent review of the soft data then available, that the Soviets had toyed with a doctrine of

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assured destruction in the Khrushchev period but had discarded it in the middle 1960s in favor of more traditional Soviet military strategy and doctrine. (Had we paid more attention to the development of the Soviet Rocket Forces as an extension of artillery, perhaps we would have been more prone to anticipate a Soviet desire for preponderance rather than parity.)

*Inadequate
analysis
must not
be mirror
imaging*

To a degree, mirror-imaging also affected the US assessments of Soviet civil defense and the probable constraints of defense costs on expansion of Soviet military forces. There are, on the other hand, specific areas in which the B Team perceived mirror-imaging which is not substantiated by the IC Staff review. For example, the estimates rather freely discussed the differences between the US and Soviet approaches to some weapons and program strategies--ASW, for example,--and reached conclusions at odds with the findings of Team B, not because of uncritical mirror-imaging, but on the basis of analysis.

(3) Piecemeal assessments of Soviet weapons programs.

There is validity to the B Team finding that there is rarely an integrated overview of interrelationship among all of the various Soviet weapons programs. There are two aspects of the issue, however, that have affected the Community's performance. Because of the size and complexity of the Soviet military establishment, the disparate needs of US consumers, and the different types of data and expertise to evaluate them, separate estimates have to be made on the different forces--naval, ground, air, rockets, etc.--in order to create fairly compact statements on each force on a timely basis, usually annually in response to the Administration's demands. Over the past several years, each of these separate force estimates has become a fairly complex package with a concentration on capabilities and operations rather than on objectives. There have been few attempts during the 1970s to develop an estimate of Soviet military policy and objectives--an integrated overview of a Soviet long run military plan--primarily because, until recently, there has been little demand for it. Defense seemed satisfied with comprehensive force estimates and NSC Staff and State expressed lack of interest in the Community's views on Soviet policy--a fact noted in the recent IC Staff Semiannual Review of Intelligence Production.

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But the more telling aspect of the B Team critique is their view that Community estimates of Soviet military policy were not very useful because they failed to analyze the available data. There is truth to this finding. There are few Community experts on Soviet affairs and they can rarely find time to dig deep and reflect on the relevant documents on Soviet military developments. Our review of the policy estimates--especially the NIE 11-4 series on Soviet policy and objectives--finds them to be rather descriptive essays with little in the way of penetrating, rigorous analysis of the forces at play. The reader of the 11-4 estimates over the years has become aware of an unrelated array of Soviet force improvements--but has gained little appreciation of a strategy that would presumably reflect Soviet force goals and objectives. This is not to say that the B Team analysis of Soviet objectives is correct; it is to say that an incisive, integrative analysis of the available information on Soviet policy issues has not been carried out consistently in the NIE process.

(4) Unsupported net assessments.

Net assessments in the context of the B Team report are defined as judgments on the balance between US and Soviet military capabilities based either on static indicators or dynamic analysis of wargaming scenarios. The B Team is right in noting that some such assessments are made both implicitly and explicitly in the national estimates without the benefit of supporting analyses. But not all net assessments in the estimates are unsupported. Our review of several recent estimates shows reasonable support for the net judgments in about half of the occurrences. For example, there was no explicit support for the judgment in NIE 11-3/8-75: "We believe the Soviets would conclude that the US could preserve the survivability of most of its alert bombers against attacks by SLBMs throughout the next ten years." Among other factors, there was no analysis of Soviet capabilities to deny reasonable warning time. On the other hand, the assessment of a growing Soviet threat to US ICBM silos was explicitly based on quantitative analysis of specific numbers of R/Vs per silo and a range of Soviet force projections. There was a tendency in the early 1970s to become quite liberal in scattering assessments, often unsupported, in the "Key Judgments" section of estimates. There appears to have been a feeling within the

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Community that the user deserved simplified statements relevant to the significance of a very complex mass of data. The Community was well aware that such judgments were often not supported by specific analyses but the analytic components were reluctant to take on the appropriate detailed studies because they require special competence, are time-consuming and rely heavily on US military data. More recently, the Community has behaved more responsibly, and, in the 1976 estimates, has done a reasonable job of explicitly stating the basis of its net judgments. And, of course, the DCI's memo of 19 January 1977 to PFIAB on this subject stipulated that NIE judgments based on net assessments should be clearly labeled as such, and that the basis for the net judgments should be clearly specified.

(5) IC Bias.

It is difficult to accept the Team B charge of implicit collusion with policy leadership. Team B finds that "on some occasions the drafters of NIEs display an evident inclination to minimize the Soviet strategic build-up because of its implications for detente, SAL negotiations, Congressional sentiments, as well as for certain US forces."

While it is true that past NIEs have contained a number of statements that incorrectly minimized the Soviet strategic build-up, the cause appears to have been mirror-imaging on Soviet goals and a shortsighted concern on the part of the estimators with the analysis of the near-term build-up of Soviet forces, rather than policy pressures. For example, during the latter half of the 1960s the estimator's inclination to minimize the eventual Soviet missile build-up was supported by a variety of well-assessed factors that were considered operative at the time. The analysis relied heavily on the duration of the extant deployment programs, the obsolescence of the missile systems being deployed, the observed R&D programs, the anticipated requirements for qualitative modifications to the existing forces, and the demands of competing programs. It was these factors, and some mirror-imaging, not political pressure, that underlay what turned out to be inaccurate projections of Soviet forces. If there was a problem, it was that there were hypotheses as to why the program would cease but no firm data and little analysis to actually gauge operative constraints within the Soviet armament industry--a condition that still exists because of the general lack of attention to this sort of analysis.

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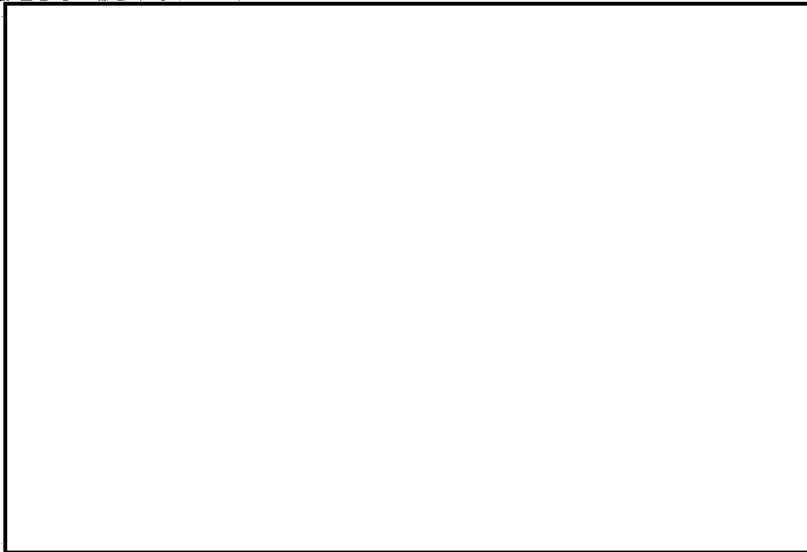
The B Team is rightly more lenient with its criticism of the estimates during the 1970s. Even so, it does note some indication of biased judgments regarding Soviet ASW developments and economic constraints on Soviet strategic programs. Presumably, if the more recent NIE judgments are generally "correct" in the eyes of the B Team, the methodology is adequate. The IC Staff review of the estimates showed no clear change in analytic and estimating methods during this period, but it did detect a slow change in the Community appraisal of the Soviet threat. The estimates changed, not at the speed demanded by the apprehensive, but slowly, in response to a continuous and perhaps more rigorous review of the evidence. It is difficult to find a reasonable cause for the changing intelligence estimates on the Soviet threat other than constant reappraisal of the evidence at hand.

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